

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

School stars
leave mark
of excellence

But their paths
to success not
always smooth

By DAVID GROSSMAN
SPORTS REPORTER

Toronto sprinter Adwoa Gyasi-Nimako of Westview Centennial Secondary has piled up a bagful of awards, including Ontario medals for excellence on the track.

But she remains puzzled at her inability to "get the quick jump."

Fortunately for her, it hasn't really hindered performances in the 100 and 200 metres in which she has posted personal best times of 11.6 seconds and 24.53, respectively.

As for the 400 metres, an event she started just this year to help with endurance, Gyasi-Nimako had a gold-medal time of 55.57 seconds at the Ontario school finals last month in Toronto.

A 19-year-old academic whiz, Gyasi-Nimako insists her main objective is to dramatically improve on the starts — and she'll get plenty of time to practise while on a full scholarship to the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque.

"The slow start is actually pretty funny because I start out looking at the backs of people," recalled Gyasi-Nimako, selected as Westview's female athlete of the year.

"Then, about 30 metres into a race, I always get a good burst of speed to run by them."

Gyasi-Nimako was one of 112 male and female students singled out by 57 schools in East York, Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough and York as athletes of year.

In total, 369 private, public and Catholic students in the Greater Toronto Area were recipients of the year-end athletic awards in The Star's 19th annual salute to amateur athletes.

While Gyasi-Nimako said she has always dreamed of securing an NCAA scholarship, she quickly settled on New Mexico despite interest from Vanderbilt, Iowa, San Diego State and Eastern Michigan.

"It was just what I wanted and a great place to learn," said the Kitchener native.

It also helped that former Olympic high jumper Milt Ottey is on the Lobos coaching staff.

Ottey convinced school officials to offer her a scholarship without having seen her compete.

"Sure it was a gamble and a big investment, but her attitude is just as important as her talent," said Ottey. "I know something about her times; she's young, motivated and we can make her better."

Among the dozens of student athletes called to the awards podium was Leaside's James Rutherford, a three-sport MVP, who was also on The Star's baseball all-star squad.

Mica Corado, a disabled swimmer from Weston, received honours for medal performances in four consecutive years at the Ontario championships.

Tracy Strutt displayed excellence in leadership and sportsmanship for Silverthorn to go along with top grades and the award for the highest points accumulated in athletics.

And running back Stephen McKenzie powered Agincourt to an appearance in the Metro Bowl football final by piling up almost 1,000 all-purpose yards for the Lancers in the '98 strike-shortened season. While 14 students were repeat winners in megacity public high schools, and Churchill's O'Neil Watson won the prestigious award for a third straight year, there were others who cashed in with personal-best achievements.

For instance, Dina Katsoulis, was singled out for her years at Cedarbrae, which included playing in eight sports and being picked to The Star's all-star volleyball squad. She's off to the University of Alabama.

Vaughan Road two-time basketball MVP Donrick Thomas also proved he knew something about high jumping and won an Ontario gold medal.

TOMORROW: Athletes from private schools as well as those in Toronto public and Catholic schools.



VINCE TALOTTA/TORONTO STAR

HIGHEST CLASS: The Star salutes top athletes across the GTA after they were selected athletes of the year at their respective schools. They include, above clockwise from front: Mica Corado (Weston), Adwoa Gyasi-Nimako (Westview), Stephen McKenzie (Agincourt), James Rutherford (Leaside) and Tracy Strutt (Silverthorn).

HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES OF THE YEAR

EAST YORK

Girls

East York — Maili Sedore (basketball, volleyball, softball)

Leaside — Safiya Muharuma (rugby, basketball, hockey, softball)

Marc Garneau — * Demetra Kantriviotis (soccer)

Boys

East York — John Hull (baseball, basketball)

Leaside — James Rutherford (basketball, baseball, volleyball)

Marc Garneau — Quincy Chase (baseball, basketball, football)

ETOBICOKE

Girls

Central Etobicoke — Keri-Ann Francis (softball, badminton)

Etobicoke — Alaina Aguanno (cross country running, track and field, swimming, soccer)

Etobicoke School of the Arts — Kathryn Vaughan (cross country running, track and field)

Kipling — Harmony Johnston (volleyball, badminton)

Lakeshore — Olivia Kusakawa (soccer)

Martingrove — Maygon Myrie (basketball, volleyball, badminton, track and field)

North Albion — Shannon Hall (soccer, volleyball)

Richview — Andrea Linfield (ice hockey, soccer)

Scarlett Heights — Francesea Papasodaro (volleyball, soccer)

Silverthorn — Tracy Strutt (volleyball, basketball, softball)

Thistletown — Muoi Ling Chhor and Allison McIntosh (sports not provided)

West Humber — Tanisha Allen (basketball, volleyball, track and field)

Boys

Central Etobicoke — Marcus Barrieffe (basketball, soccer, volleyball)

Etobicoke — Mark Kantor (swimming, football, wrestling, volleyball, track and field)

Etobicoke School of the Arts — Lukas Giniotis (basketball, volleyball, soccer)

Kipling — Inderjit Sandher (basketball, volleyball)

Lakeshore — Wayne Harwood (baseball)

Martingrove — Christopher Parker (ice hockey, baseball, football, track and field, lacrosse)

North Albion — Aaron Hutchinson (basketball, track and field)

Richview — Justin Pouzar (wrestling, football, baseball)

Scarlett Heights — * Aman Anderson (badminton, volleyball, soccer)

Silverthorn — Stephen Frake (ice hockey, baseball, football)

Thistletown — Dzenan Kurt (sports not provided)

West Humber — Joseph Allen (basketball, track and field)

NORTH YORK

Girls

A Y Jackson — Janet McKee (basketball, volleyball, soccer, tennis, track and field)

Bathurst Heights — Yemisi Olaususi (sports not provided)

C W Jefferys — Not announced by school

Earl Halg — Melody Brisbin (volleyball, basketball, field hockey, soccer)

Emery — Sara Moore (volleyball, softball, golf)

Etienné Brule — Caroline Gort (sports not provided)

George S Henry Academy — Anca Prica (swimming, track and field)

Georges Vanier — Meron Tsegaye (basketball, volleyball, softball, track and field)

Nelson A Boylen — * Denise Campbell (basketball, volleyball, soccer, track and field)

Newtonbrook — Cathy Ellis (swimming, water polo)

Northview Heights — Heather Fraser (rugby, swimming, softball, basketball, volleyball, track and field, water polo, cross country running) and Janet Fraser (swimming, water polo, rugby, softball)

Sir Sandford Fleming — * Grace Adegunlehin (basketball, volleyball, track and field, soccer)

Victoria Park — Kim Yae (basketball, volleyball, soccer, softball, skiing)

Westview Centennial — Adwoa Gyasi-Nimako (track and field)

William Lyon Mackenzie — * Tova Natanzon (basketball, volleyball, softball)

York Mills — Rebecca Moskowitz (field hockey, volleyball, soccer)

Boys

A Y Jackson — * Peter Toose (swimming, water polo)

Bathurst Heights — * Steve Morrison (basketball)

C W Jefferys — Not announced by school

Earl Halg — Ivan Cheung (volleyball, basketball, baseball, tennis)

Emery — Tyrone Moses (basketball, track and field)

Etienné Brule — Patrick Blit (sports not provided)

George S Henry Academy — Aidin Milani (track and field)

Georges Vanier — * Kirk Williams (baseball, cricket, soccer)

Nelson A Boylen — Luqman Ahmad (cricket, badminton, table tennis)

Newtonbrook — Victor Kass (water polo, swimming)

Northview Heights — Mojtaba Nadiri (soccer, badminton, cricket)

Victoria Park — Hisham Khalil (track and field, cross country running)

Westview Centennial — Charles Wyman (baseball, volleyball)

William Lyon Mackenzie — Evan Weinstein (baseball, volleyball, basketball)

York Mills — James Cunningham (water polo, track and field, swimming, cross country skiing, cross country running)

SCARBOROUGH

Girls

Agincourt — Heather Phillips (basketball, volleyball, soccer)

Albert Campbell — Melanie Tyson (soccer, softball, badminton, flag football, basketball, volleyball)

Birchmount Park — Suzanna Dreifelds (field hockey, volleyball, cross country running, wrestling, track and field)

Cedarbrae — Dina Katsoulis (volleyball, basketball, flag football, rugby, swimming, tennis, golf, track and field)

David and Mary Thomson — Erin Miniotis (basketball, tennis, volleyball, soccer)

Dr Norman Bethune — Alia El-Rifai (volleyball, softball, field hockey, badminton, basketball)

L'Amoreaux — Stephanie Prato (field hockey, volleyball, soccer)

Lester B Pearson — Shana Cooper (basketball, volleyball, badminton, softball, soccer)

Maplewood — * Stacy Ann Clarke (badminton, basketball, softball, track and field)

Midland Avenue — Tina Kiriakos (baseball, volleyball, badminton)

R H King Academy — Jennifer Lazarevski (basketball, volleyball, softball)

Sir John A Macdonald — Maureen Huckins (field hockey, soccer, volleyball)

Sir Oliver Mowat — Amy Ball (basketball, volleyball, ice hockey, flag football)

Sir Robert Borden — Orette Simpson-Lee (basketball, track and field)

Sir Wilfrid Laurier — Erika van Putten (field hockey, swimming, flag football, golf, badminton)

SATEC/W A Porter — Cherise Brown (soccer, basketball, volleyball, track and field)

West Hill — Martina Shields (basketball, volleyball, track and field)

Wexford — Kerri Tambling (swimming, cross country running, volleyball, flag football)

Woburn — Christine Doak (basketball, volleyball, softball) and Viromi Fernando (basketball, softball, volleyball)

Boys

Agincourt — Stephen McKenzie (football, rugby)

Albert Campbell — Rahim Lallani (swimming, speed swimming, track and field)

Birchmount Park — Josh Lalor (volleyball, soccer, badminton, cross country running)

Cedarbrae — Jason Baker (ice hockey, rugby)

David and Mary Thomson — Dermot Begley (football, wrestling, track and field)

Dr Norman Bethune — Justin Phillips (basketball, volleyball, soccer)

L'Amoreaux — Yohan Hamilton (wrestling, dragon boat racing)

Lester B Pearson — Duane Benjamin (football, soccer, track and field, basketball)

Maplewood — * Howard Campbell (volleyball, basketball, softball, track and field, cross country running)

Midland — Andrew Li (swimming, tennis, basketball)

R H King Academy — Geron DuPorte (basketball, soccer)

Sir Wilfrid Laurier — Will Walker (rugby, football, soccer, basketball)

West Hill — * Daniel Wilson (wrestling, rugby)

Wexford — Nick Vaiopoulos (volleyball, soccer,

basketball, softball)

Winston Churchill — O'Neil Watson (cross country running, track and field, basketball, volleyball)

Woburn — * Kevin Young (wrestling, football, ice hockey, rugby)

YORK

Girls

Frank Oke — Stephanie Coates (archery, softball, track and field, basketball)

George Harvey — Latoya Gregory (badminton, soccer, volleyball, track and field, basketball)

Runnymede — Kimberley Foley (soccer, swimming, cross country running, track and field, ice hockey) and Tegan Upjohn (swimming, rugby, cross country running, track and field, soccer)

Vaughan Road — Michelle Joe (soccer, track and field)

Weston — Andrea Dart (swimming)

York Humber — Sherene Burke (badminton, track and field, volleyball, softball)

York Memorial — Miren Iribarren (soccer, volleyball, track and field, tennis, cross country running)

Boys

Frank Oke — Lance Barnes (baseball, basketball, archery, cross country running, track and field)

George Harvey — Lester Cerda (badminton, baseball, volleyball)

Runnymede — Ryan Kerins (ice hockey, rugby, baseball)

Vaughan Road — * Donrick Thomas (track and field, basketball)

Weston — Mica Corado (swimming, wheelchair basketball)

York Humber — Maurice Gabriel (soccer, basketball, badminton, track and field)

York Memorial — * Bryan Batista (track and field, swimming, soccer, cross country running)

Note: * Indicates athlete has won award for second consecutive year.

The following schools did not select athletes of the year: **North York** — Don Mills, Downsview, Fleming (M); **Scarborough** — Sir William Osler, Stephen Leacock, Timothy Eaton, Bendale, Winston Churchill (F), SATEC/Porter (M), Macdonald (M), Mowat (M) and Sir Robert Borden (M)

— Compiled by David Grossman